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single volumes, of which it is composed. It is capable of being made, we fully believe, the most popular periodical work published in the country. It would richly repay the time and attention of any conductor, however gifted and respectable. And in exhorting the accomplished gentleman, who is understood hitherto to have presided over its preparation, to persevere in this honorable pursuit, and to make it more and more an object of his studies and labors, we believe we consult the interest of the reading public, as well as his own reputation. If the authority of a name be wanted to stamp a character on the work, let him be reminded, that he is executing a plan, which was first projected by Burke, and for years occupied no small portion of his time.

ART. II.—1. *Fuersten und Voelker von Sued-Europa im Sechszehnten und Siebzehnten Jahrhundert, vornehmlich aus ungedrueckten Gesandschafts-Berichten.* VON LEOPOLD RANKE. [Princes and Nations of the South of Europe in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries, compiled principally from the Reports of Ambassadors. By LEOPOLD VON RANKE.] Hamburg. 1827.

2. *Geschichte des Osmanischen Reiches aus den Quellen.* VON JOSEPH VON HAMMER. [History of the Ottoman Empire, from Original Sources. By JOSEPH VON HAMMER.] Perth. 1827.

3. *Des Osmanischen Reichs Staatsverfassung und Staatsverwaltung von Demselben.* [Constitution and Administration of the Ottoman Empire. By the same.] Vienna. 1827.

We have recently seen a great empire, which but a few centuries ago, threatened to extend its dominion over all the European continent, preserved from entire ruin only by the relations of its victorious invader with other powers. The terror, which that empire formerly inspired, is proved by the well-known fact, that prayers for the destruction of the Turks are still to be found in the litanies of some of the German churches. It may not be uninteresting to inquire, in what manner, and by what means, so extraordinary a change has been produced in so short a period ; and we shall endeavor in

this article, to present our readers with a brief view of the causes of the decline of the Ottoman empire.

In attempting to ascertain the causes to which the decline of any institution is properly to be attributed, we shall be materially aided in our inquiries, by first investigating those of its ascendancy. We shall thus discover the essential principles of its organisation, in which are not unfrequently to be traced the sources of its decay. The decline of the Roman empire was not owing to its invasion by barbarians, but that invasion was rather the result of its decline. The downfall of empires may doubtless be accelerated by external causes, though the operation of these causes is generally limited and partial. It is to the effect of internal causes, that the greatness of the Ottoman empire, in the reign of Solymán II., as well as the subsequent decline of its power, must be attributed.

In studying the history of the Turks, very little assistance is to be derived from their native writers; but this defect is in a great measure supplied, by the reports of many European ambassadors, who resided at the court of the Sultan, at the period when the Ottoman empire underwent the most important changes. The most valuable of these are the *relazioni* of the ambassadors of Venice. This haughty republic, whose position enabled her not unfrequently to throw a decisive weight into the scale of contending nations, whose commerce brought her into close connexion with the greatest kingdoms, and made her friendship desirable to all, more than supplied her want of physical power by the wisdom of her policy. Her most able and experienced citizens were employed as her representatives at foreign courts. They were required to send weekly statements of all important occurrences to their own government, and upon their return to Venice, to present a very full and particular account of the court and nation in which they had resided, to the Council of the *Pregadi*. This Council was composed of men of talent and experience, who had either formerly been, or might subsequently be called to officiate in a similar capacity. In the reports of the ambassadors the situation and circumstances of foreign courts, the condition of the people, the administration of the government, and their relative position in regard to other States, particularly Venice, were described. Together with his report, the present, which he had received from the sovereign, was laid by the ambassador at the feet of his *Signoria*. These reports were read before

the council, in presence of the doge, to whom they were addressed ; and as they contained the results of acute and personal observation, were commonly interesting and satisfactory. The practice was considered by the Venetians as very useful to the state ; and it must have been particularly important at a period, when travellers were not very numerous, and the narratives of their travels were very seldom published. It was, however, condemned by some, who called it a dissection of courts and governments ; and we find that these ambassadors were not unfrequently reproached for their freedom and officiousness. The reports were preserved in the archives of the state.

The name *relazione* was first used in 1465, though the ambassadors of Venice were required to note down every thing remarkable which they observed abroad, by a law passed two centuries earlier. Both the name and the practice were retained until so late a period as the beginning of the French revolution. They are frequently referred to between the years 1530 and 1630, during which period, it was not unusual for exalted personages to employ clerks for the purpose of copying them.

The ambassadors of the pope, of the king of Spain, and the dukes of Florence and Ferrara, were instructed to prepare reports of a similar kind ; and large collections of these documents were formed, either original or copied, many of which are still preserved in some European libraries. The collection of Venetian *relazioni*, in the library of Paris, is so complete, that, in the opinion of competent judges, it would fully supply the loss of all the archives of Venice. For the first collections of the kind, we are indebted to Cardinal Vitellozo, who spared no labor or expense in procuring these manuscripts, and whose example was soon followed by many other persons of distinguished eminence. Several modern authors have availed themselves of these historical treasures ; and in the valuable work of Mr. Ranke, Professor of History at Berlin, the title of which is placed at the head of this article, we see the fortunate result of a diligent and judicious study of them. Of the numerous other writers upon the subject of Turkey, we shall mention only Mr. Joseph von Hammer, one of the first oriental scholars of the age. Three volumes of his great work, the title of which is also prefixed to this article, and which bring the History of the Ottoman Empire down to the

year 1574, have been already published. Mr. Von Hammer was for many years employed in the diplomatic service of Austria in Egypt and Turkey, and is now interpreter of oriental languages in the department of state at Vienna. Besides the work already mentioned, he has published the Reports of Resmi Ahmed Effendi, Turkish ambassador to Vienna and Berlin; a translation of the Trumpet of the Holy War; a work entitled the Constitution of the Ottoman Empire; and Views on a Journey from Constantinople to Brussa and Olympos.

The origin of the empire of the Ottomans, as it is described in their own traditions, was by no means imposing. It appears from these, that the founder of that empire cultivated the ground with his slaves, and that a flag was employed by him as a signal to call them from their labors at noon. When they accompanied him in his military expeditions, they continued to assemble under the same signal. This personage was favored with a prophetic dream, in which a tree appeared to shoot forth from his body, and to overshadow the world. It is further related, that, after a considerable part of Asia Minor had become subject to this tribe, Solyman, the nephew of Osman, as he was one day riding by the Hellespont, amidst the ruins of ancient cities, fell into a profound reverie. 'Of what,' asked one of his companions, 'is my khan thinking?' 'Of the mode,' replied Solyman, 'in which I shall reach the European shores.' These companions of Solyman were the first Turks who invaded Europe. Amurath I., his brother, conquered Adrianople; and from this time the power of the Ottomans increased with great rapidity. The successors of Amurath were uniformly victorious, until Solyman II., in the beginning of the sixteenth century, became the ruler of a vast empire. The name of this powerful sultan was rendered formidable throughout the Mediterranean by the famous Chaired-din Barbarossa, who boasted that his turban alone, placed upon a staff, would drive the Christians far back into the country. At this time, thirty kingdoms and nearly eight thousand leagues of sea-coast were included in the Ottoman empire; and Solyman assumed the pompous and not altogether inappropriate titles of Emperor of Emperors, Prince of Princes, Distributer of Earthly Crowns, Shadow of God over both Hemispheres, Ruler of Europe and Asia, and of the Black and White Seas. One of the causes of this vast and sudden accession of power was the degenerate condition of the conquered countries; but

it was principally to be attributed to the peculiar organisation of the conquering tribe.

It was the custom of the Ottomans, to divide the countries which they conquered into a multitude of fiefs. The highest officers of the empire were two *beglerbegs*. Next in rank to them were the *sandgiacbegs*, the commanders of a flag ; then the *alaibegs*, who commanded the different divisions of the army ; and lastly, the owners of larger or smaller fiefs, which were known by the name of *siamets* or *timars*. All these were compelled, upon the requisition of the sultan, to provide horsemen, varying in number, according to the importance of their respective fiefs. The horsemen, thus furnished, were called *sipahi* or *spahi*. By means of this arrangement, the sultan was enabled at any moment to summon to his standard eighty thousand soldiers from Europe, and fifty thousand from Natolia. The owner of a *siamet* or *timar*, with an income of three thousand aspers (about thirty-six dollars and a half), was required to provide a single horseman, and an additional one for every five thousand aspers of additional income. So far there was no essential difference between the feudal system of Turkey, and that of Western Europe. Among the Turks, however, as there existed no nobility, no right of immediate succession was vested in the son. In fact, it was expressly provided by Solyman, that the infant son of a *sandgiacbeg*, with an income of seven hundred thousand aspers, should inherit only a *timar* with an income of five thousand aspers, and be compelled in addition to this, to maintain a single horseman. The son of a *sipahi*, who died in actual service, was entitled to a larger *timar*, than if the *sipahi* died at home. The private property of a wealthy *sandgiacbeg* descended not to his sons, but his successor ; and the sons of the most affluent were placed upon a level with those of the poorest, excepting that none but the sons of *timarli*, that is, owners of *timars*, were entitled to fiefs of this description. In regard to conquered countries, this military body might be considered as a kind of nobility, while in regard to each other, they were on a footing of perfect equality. The system was obviously well calculated to unite the conquerors in a vigorous and powerful corps, completely subject to the sultan, who bestowed these *timars* at pleasure, and resumed them again after the expiration of a certain period, while, according to the system of Western Europe, fiefs, when they were given to vassals, were generally

altogether lost to the government. The Turkish system appears to have been the more equitable of the two, as the timars, instead of being inherited, were distributed as the recompense of merit. But it was the feudal system of the West to which we owe the enlightened freedom of modern times, which arose from the conflicts between the interests of different classes of society, placed, by the natural operation of that system, in a state of direct and perpetual hostility to each other, and from the formation and growth of cities, the immediate results of those conflicts. Liberty, as it exists among us, was entirely unknown to the ancients. They saw in the individual only a servant of the state, while we consider the freedom and happiness of the individual, as the purpose for which the state was instituted. The system of the Ottomans, recognising no order of nobility, conferring no permanent privileges, and regarding all as equal, has been correctly described by an ingenious Frenchman, as '*un despotisme absolu modéré par la régicide*.'

But there existed among the Turks an institution still more important, which may be denominated an organised system of slavery. The whole country was traversed once in five years by small bodies of soldiers, each of whom was provided with a *firman*, or decree of the sultan. The commanders of these bodies were empowered to summon together the whole male population of every place which was inhabited wholly, or in part, by Christians; and to carry away every individual of whatever age, who should appear to be at all remarkable for strength or beauty, or proficiency or skill in any art. These, together with prisoners of war, were sent to the court of the Grand Seignor. No pacha returned from any expedition, without bringing a present for the sultan of handsome Christian boys, who, though they were for the most part natives of those originally Christian countries, which had been conquered by the Turks, were sometimes brought from Poland, Bohemia, Russia, Italy, and Germany. The individuals thus collected were divided into two classes. Those who belonged to one of these classes were educated by the peasants of Asia Minor in the Mahometan faith, or employed as menial servants in the sultan's seraglio; while the members of the other class, which consisted of the most promising, were placed in the seraglios of Adrianople, Galata, and Constantinople, where they were taught to read and write by teachers, whose compensation

amounted to eight aspers (about six cents) a day. If public education be valuable in proportion to its cheapness, nothing can be more meritorious than the Turkish system of instruction.

At a certain age, these youths, for they were generally such, were circumcised, which ceremony being performed, those who had been engaged in menial occupations were enrolled as Janissaries, and those, who were educated in the seraglio, were made sipahis : not, however, sipahis with a fief, but of that number, who were paid by the sultan, and attended him as a mounted body-guard. The latter were sometimes elevated to the highest offices of the government.

The members of both these classes were subjected to the severest discipline. It is stated in a *relazione* of Sorranzo, that the menial class were instructed in all military arts, and taught to endure the extremity of abstinence and privation. At night, they slept together in a long lighted hall, where they were watched by a vigilant inspector, who hardly permitted them to move. At a later period, when they were enrolled as Janissaries, they were lodged in barracks resembling convents. They were there arranged in separate *odas*, and cooked, ate, and slept together : in fact, most of their military dignities received their appellations from the kitchen and its dishes. Here, no law was recognised, but that of subordination and obedience. All were subjected to the strictest regulations, and the younger were compelled to respect and serve the elder. No one was ever permitted to pass the night without the barracks, and whenever corporal punishment was resorted to, the sufferer was required, with his head veiled, to kiss the hand of him, who inflicted it.

Those, who remained in the seraglio, were divided into classes under the control of eunuchs. Each of these classes was composed of ten members, who were regularly instructed in science and in military exercises for the term of three years, at the expiration of which they were permitted by the sultan to leave the seraglio. If they preferred to remain there, they were gradually advanced from *chamber* to *chamber*, according to their respective ages, until they attained perhaps one of the four higher offices of the *inner chamber*, from which station they might be promoted to the rank of a beglerbeg, a *capitan-deïri* (admiral), or a vizier. Those, who chose to leave the seraglio, were admitted as members of one of the

four highest classes of the paid sipahi, and might be seen galloping out of the city, exulting in their new dresses, and gaily swinging the purses, which they had received from the sultan.

It will hence be perceived, that the institution of the Janissaries was only a part of a well-organised system of slavery, which answered perfectly the purposes for which it was designed. All the *relazioni* agree in extolling their valor, temperance, and admirable discipline. Busbeck, the Austrian ambassador at the court of Solyman, remarks, that they appeared to him sometimes to resemble monks, and sometimes statues; and that their dress, with the exception of the plume of heron's feathers, was extremely simple. Native Turks were uniformly excluded from their ranks, as was the case with all others, who had been brought up under the parental roof. By means of this singular institution, Christian boys, taken forcibly from their homes, or from convents and taverns, were raised to the highest dignities of a vast empire, while it served at the same time as a school of education for those soldiers, on whom the sultan always placed his principal reliance. Many victories were gained by their unaided exertions, and but for them the battle of Varna, which laid the foundation of the Ottoman greatness, must have been lost. They were accustomed to boast, that they had never been defeated, and Lazarus Schwendi, a German commander, who made several campaigns against the Turks, confirms the truth of this assertion. Nor were the effects of the system less striking in regard to the *sipahis*, and the other portion of those, who had been educated in the seraglio, and who were subsequently employed in civil offices. A single instance only, that of the noble Scanderbeg, occurred of the return of any of their number to the Christian faith. The Janissaries elected their Aga from their own ranks. There was no order of nobility to control their ambition, and prevent them from receiving the advancement due to their enterprise and valor. A field of action was thrown open to all; and they ceased to remember that they were merely slaves. It was by no means rare for Christians to forsake their own country and religion, in order to become slaves with them. Even the sultan, their absolute and only master, was not entirely independent of their will. Not even the son of a vizier, who had just been promoted from their ranks to that exalted station, could be added to their number. The sons of the sipahis and officers of government,—for the

Janissaries were not allowed to marry until a later period,—were compelled to enter the fifth and sixth divisions of the paid sipahi, or were made timarli, among whom, as we have already seen, the territory of the whole empire was divided. This corps of vassals was thus constantly recruited with new members, more deeply indebted, and consequently more devoted to the sultan, than the sons of timarli could have been.

We have thus attempted to describe a most singular institution, by means of which the support and defence of a vast empire was made to depend wholly upon foreigners and slaves, so enamored, notwithstanding, with their condition, as to fight with the utmost readiness and fury against their own countrymen.

The whole power of the Ottoman empire accordingly was vested in two bodies; first, in the timarli, who were native vassals of the sultan; and secondly, in those slaves, of whom the greater portion constituted the flower of the Turkish army, while the rest were employed in the capacity of civil or military officers. The very existence of both these bodies depended altogether upon a state of war. During peace, the sultan could bestow no new timars, and the corps of Janissaries were in danger of sinking into degeneracy. It was war, therefore, which laid the foundation of the Turkish power, and it was by war only, that this power could be preserved. Nor was it less essential to the sultan's personal security, whose vassals must otherwise have aspired to independence of their master. In fact, so thoroughly martial were the Turks, that the camp appeared to be their home; and at the period of their greatness, it is said to have presented a most imposing spectacle. Every thing was kept in a state of remarkable cleanliness and perfect order: neither swearing, quarrelling, drinking, nor gambling was permitted. Every sipahi was furnished with a tent. A horse was provided by the sultan to convey the baggage of every five Janissaries, and a common tent for the accommodation of every twenty-five. Their arrangement, discipline, and mode of living were as simple and rigorous in the camp as in the barrack, while the camp abounded with gold and silver, precious stones, splendid arms, the finest horses, and eunuchs. What a contrast to the turbulent and unruly mass of a feudal levy!

This warlike propensity was also cherished and confirmed by the Mahometan doctrine of predestination; while the pro-

hibition of the use of wine and ardent spirits, and the injunction of frequent bathing and ablutions were highly favorable to a military life. It is worthy of remark, that the Christians are uniformly called citizens and the Turks *askeri* (soldiers), when both are mentioned in the national decrees. In a system like this, which was exclusively military, and destitute of any common principle of union, it was also indispensable, that the sultan, the soul and centre of the whole, should himself be animated by a warlike spirit, and we find accordingly, that the power of the Ottoman empire began rapidly to decline, when the sultans ceased to be soldiers, and the situation of the neighboring countries rendered conquest no longer possible.

The same circumstances then, to which the greatness of the Ottoman empire is to be attributed, became subsequently the immediate causes of its decline. The influence of the Mahometan religion has been sometimes included among these causes. We are far from believing, that this religion is positively favorable to the progress of civilisation; nor do we conceive that it tends directly to obstruct it. It would be unfair to judge of the character of Mahometanism, from the exhibition of it, as it appears at this day, among the different nations of the east. The time has been, when the attainments of the followers of Mahomet in art and science were far greater than those of Christians, and when the personal character of the former was by far the most chivalrous and elevated. We allude to the Arabians of the middle ages. The Turks, from whom our ideas of Mahometanism are commonly derived, were long regarded even by other Mahometans as a rude and uncivilised tribe. The union of a civil code with the rules of religious faith in the Koran, is undoubtedly of pernicious tendency; and we know, that this religion has often been employed as an instrument to excite its followers to unjust and unnecessary war. In the Trumpet of the Holy War, to which we have already adverted, it is enjoined, that infidels must either be converted or subdued; and that, where they are obstinate in heresy, their extirpation is an act of holiness, which deserves the most exalted recompense in heaven. This book, however, is not, like the Koran, regarded as of divine authority and origin. It was translated into the Turkish language by order of Solymian II. for the use probably of the youth in his seraglio. The same sultan promulgated a code, called *multeka*, very similar to some of the papal bulls, in which war is earnestly recommended against all unbelievers.

In proceeding to give an account of the decline of the Ottoman empire, we shall in the first place speak of the character of the Sultans. The contrast between the predecessors and successors of Solyman has been often noticed. Prior to his reign, the Ottomans were animated by a spirit so gallant and chivalrous, that we read their history with feelings of admiration, rather than disgust ; but the scene is suddenly and completely changed. The Sultans became indolent and voluptuous ; internal discord followed ; sons rebelled against their fathers ; defeats were sustained on the frontiers and at sea ; and the weakness of the whole system was at once revealed, when its rulers became incompetent to its direction and control. We will mention some particulars of the history of Selim II., the successor of Solyman, as an illustration of the remark, both because his example was imitated by many succeeding Sultans, and because several essential innovations were accomplished during his reign. Among these changes there was one of great importance. It might appear that the harem would destroy the warlike spirit of its master, but its voluptuousness is not very likely to attach men to domestic life. According to an ancient custom, the mother of the sultan's first-born son was entitled to the highest rank among the females of the harem. Solyman thought proper to violate this usage, by marrying a slave named Roxalana ; and a singular narrative of this event is contained in a letter of the French ambassador Codignac. He tells us, that Roxalana was anxious to build a mosque for the salvation of her soul, but it was declared by the *Mufti* (chief-priest), that the pious acts of a slave operated only for the spiritual benefit of the master. To gratify her wishes, Solyman emancipated her ; but the free Roxalana being somewhat less submissive to his passion than before, and the *fetva* of the Mufti having determined that she could not become so without sin, he at length married her and settled upon her a pension of five thousand sultanas. The ambition of the lady was not yet satisfied ; for she instantly requested Solyman to appoint her son Selim his successor, to the exclusion of Mustapha, his elder son by a different mother, who was much esteemed by the Turks. Upon receiving information of this, Mustapha withdrew from Constantinople ; but was immediately denounced as a rebel by his father, who pursued him into Asia, and ordered that he should be put to death. Bajazet, a son of Roxalana, fell also by the hand of

Solyman's executioner, according to a Turkish custom, which requires that all the sultan's younger brothers must be destroyed, when he ascends the throne. Roxalana's projects of ambition were accomplished; and her son Selim was the first in the series of inefficient and degenerate sultans.

During the reign of Solyman a law was abrogated, which exempted the Janissaries from the performance of active military duty, except when they were commanded by the sultan in person. The effect of this change became very obvious in the reign of Selim. Formerly, the sons of the sultan accompanied their father to the field, or were intrusted with the conduct of military operations; and some of the most important conquests had been effected by their ability and valor. From this period, they were banished from the court and the camp, and placed under the charge of a pacha in some remote province, until at last they were actually confined in prison, until the very hour of their accession to the throne. The supreme command must then have fallen into the hands of an individual, who had been during his life deprived of personal liberty, and who, when suddenly elevated to the absolute command of millions of men, must have been intoxicated by the possession of unrestricted power.

In the beginning of his reign, Amurath III., the son of Selim, appeared to be studious, temperate, and manly, and not averse to the hardships of a military life. The following story is related of this prince, in one of the *relazioni*. It has been already mentioned, that a custom of the Turks required every sultan, when he first assumed that dignity, to put his brothers to death. This usage was not of very ancient date; since the brothers of Osman are known to have accompanied him to the field. Amurath, being of a mild and merciful disposition, was anxious to provide for the safety of his brothers before taking possession of the throne; and with this view consulted with his *Muellim*, his Mufti, and other learned men. So persuaded were they, however, of the necessity of the sacrifice, that his arguments were wholly ineffectual; and he yielded only after he had disputed with them on the subject for the space of eighteen hours. He then summoned the chief of the mutes, and, pointing to the corpse of his father, gave him nine handkerchiefs for the purpose of strangling all his brothers. As he delivered them he wept. It is farther related of him, that he once inquired, after the history of his father had

been read in his presence, what war would be attended with the greatest difficulty? 'War with Persia,' was the reply. 'That,' then rejoined Amurath, 'is the war, which I shall undertake.' But the character of this monarch underwent subsequently an entire change. He soon began to betray a strong aversion for warlike exercises and the chase. The strength of his ruling passions, avarice and voluptuousness, were developed in the seclusion of his palace, where he lived surrounded only by his mutes, dwarfs and eunuchs. By the indulgence of the last of these passions, he destroyed his health; and in regard to the degree in which he was governed by the other, it is said by some of the European ambassadors, that he caused a subterraneous cell of marble to be constructed, in which he annually buried two millions and a half of piastres; and that he melted and coined the golden ornaments of ancient works of art, in order to deposit them in the same cell, the door of which was concealed by his bed. Offices became venal; and nothing but liberal presents could secure his favor. When his audiences were concluded, at which those who brought him the most magnificent gifts were noticed only by an indolent nod, it was his custom to retire to his gardens, where his principal amusements were mock battles with his deformed mutes, singing or dancing women, or lascivious comedies performed by Jews.

Ahmed, who was a sultan of manly and benevolent character, began to reign in 1603, in the sixteenth year of his age. Though his ambition appeared to have been excited by the achievements of Solyman, he effected no enterprises of a warlike character. In fact, no occupation, or pleasure, had power to fix his attention long, and none of his many plans were ever completely executed. His successors, with the single exception of Amurath IV., were men of inferior capacity. That sultan at first gave much promise of talent and strength of character, but subsequently became stern and cruel. In the space of five years, twenty-five thousand persons were put to death by his order, or with his own hand. He attempted to restore the discipline and efficiency of the Janissaries, who had lost much of their former superiority; but his exertions were ineffectual; while, by allowing to Mussulmans the use of wine, besides violating a positive injunction of the Koran, he encouraged disorder and licentiousness among a people, who could be controlled only by rigorous laws.

The *Veziri-Aasam*, or Grand Vizier, who was in reality, as he was sometimes denominated, master of the empire, occasionally supplied by his talent and vigor the want of those qualities in the sultan. During the reign of Selim, the government was administered by Mehmed, by birth a Bosnian. This most able and excellent Grand Vizier received the rudiments of early education in the family of his uncle, a christian clergyman of Java, but was placed while still young in the seraglio of the Grand Seignior, where he was brought up according to the rules of the institution, an account of which has been already given, until he was preferred at length to the highest offices of the empire. The ambassadors have uniformly described him as active, just and liberal, averse to revenge and avarice, and not at all inclined to abuse his unbounded power. His decisions were always prompt and impartial, and the very meanest individual found as ready access to him, and as quick redress of his grievances, as the most exalted. Four days in the week he held a public divan for this purpose. He caused aqueducts, bridges, and public baths to be constructed in every part of the empire; and was particularly attentive to the establishment of caravansaries, where food was gratuitously provided for the weary traveller. From the fear of exciting the Sultan's jealousy, he erected no edifice in Constantinople, excepting a small mosque, in which his twelve children, who were put to death because their father was the son-in-law of Selim, were buried. His power was limited by Amurath III., the successor of Selim, in order to favor the viziers of the *Cupula*, who were subordinate to the *Veziri-Aasam*; but he succeeded in preserving the favor of three Sultans, until at length he was assassinated by a timarli, whom he had for some good reason doubtless deprived of his timar. With him, says Floriani, the virtue of the Turks was extinguished forever. The viziers became no less degenerate than the Sultans; and even those of benevolent disposition were compelled to sacrifice their good intentions to the caprice and avarice of their masters. Sinan, one of the viziers of Amurath, would sometimes present him with two hundred thousand zekins in order to secure his favor, while the Capudan Cicala openly declared, that he was compelled to resort to piracy, to find the means of making similar presents. The vizier was no longer selected only from among the slaves of the seraglio. Great calamities were also brought upon the people by the

frequent change of these officers. Extortion appeared to constitute their sole qualification. In fact, the whole system of government became little better than a vast system of extortion. Regardless of the proper business of their office, the viziers lived in a style of luxury and splendor scarcely surpassed by that of their masters ; and their example was speedily imitated by all the inferior officers of the empire. All the true objects of government were utterly neglected. The name of ruler had no other meaning than that of a robber and disturber of the peace. Factions arose within the very walls of the seraglio ; and the Kiskar-Aga, chief of the black eunuchs, became a personage of great influence and dignity. In the mean time, the changes of the viziers became more and more frequent ; for nothing more was required for their removal, than to send the executioner to them with a cord—an intimation, upon receiving which, it was the duty of the individual to whom it was addressed, forthwith to hang himself. This summary process was the approved Turkish method of reform.

So long as their ancient customs underwent no change, the Janissaries were almost invincible ; but they also participated in the universal spirit of degeneracy, and became turbulent and ungovernable. About the time of Selim's accession, Mehmed, the Grand Vizier just mentioned, had obtained possession of Sigeth, a small fortress in Hungary ; but having refused to allow the Janissaries the present, which was usually given when a new sultan was girded with the sword of Osman, they deserted him, and hurried back to Constantinople in a state of great disorder. They reached the city before Selim had arrived from Asia, and declared that the Sultan should not be permitted to enter the seraglio, until they should receive in addition to the customary present, a promise of increased pay, and permission to enrol their sons as members of their body. All efforts of the viziers to induce them to return to their duty, were wholly unavailing. In vain did their Aga throw himself into the midst of them, with the handkerchief, the instrument of execution, bound upon his head. The gates of the seraglio were not opened, until all their requisitions had been complied with. This was the first in the series of those revolts and massacres of the Janissaries, by which so many Sultans subsequently perished. Thenceforth, like the prætorian guards of Rome, they became the absolute controllers of the succession to the throne. The sword of Osman had hitherto descended

regularly from father to son ; but they chose to confer the sovereignty on Mustapha, the brother of Ahmed, whose life had been spared by the latter, because, being an idiot, he was regarded among the Turks as an oracle. Shortly after, they deposed Mustapha and called Osman, Ahmed's son, to fill the vacant throne ; but being soon dissatisfied with their new Sultan, they dragged Mustapha, who had been confined in a subterraneous cavern, forth again to light, and at once restored him to his former dignity. But this strange ruler was destined to experience a repetition of his former disaster ; being deposed a second time, and compelled to surrender his authority to Amurath IV., the second son of Ahmed, who succeeded in setting his benefactors at defiance by his relentless cruelty, and by the murder of their chief. As a military corps, however, the Janissaries were at this time far less efficient and powerful than at any former period. In addition to the change of their ancient customs, to which we have already adverted, they were permitted by Ahmed to engage in commerce and the mechanical arts ; until at length they became the laughing-stock of Christian armies. The forcible capture of Christian boys was abandoned as early as the middle of the seventeenth century, very fortunately for the Greeks, whose struggle for independence must have been delayed much longer, if their finest youth had continued to be torn from them and placed in the seraglio.

Native Turks began now to be admitted to the highest dignities, and the habit of blind obedience was gradually abandoned. Every subject is supposed to be the slave of the sultan ; but there is a wide difference between the subjection of a native Turk, and of a pupil of the seraglio. The sipahi, after the admission of the Turks into their ranks, became like the Janissaries, turbulent and factious. In 1589, they compelled the Grand Seignior to reinstate Sinan, who had just been deposed in the office of Grand Vizier. Nor was the degeneracy of the timarli less rapid in its progress. The timars, which had been originally granted to the sons of sipahi only, were bestowed upon many others. Like the sultans, pachas and sandgiacks gave them to their favorites, or sold them to the highest bidder. The obligation to maintain a certain number of horsemen, and to exercise themselves in the use of arms, was entirely disregarded. Aini, a feudal officer of Ahmed, complained most bitterly of these abuses. He declared, that reviews

of the sipahi were abandoned ; that a sandgiack, bound to maintain a hundred horsemen, actually maintained hardly fifteen ; and that no more than a tenth part of the enrolled number, ever made their appearance. In the reign of Selim II., Nasut, his Grand Vizier, fell into disgrace in consequence of his efforts to reform these abuses. They were in the first instance owing to an innovation made by Solyman, in bestowing timars upon the sons of foreigners. All these different institutions had been formerly kept separate with the greatest care, and when this ceased to be the case, they soon lost all their efficiency and character.

We have thus given a brief sketch of the decay of those institutions, on which the greatness of the Ottoman empire was founded ; and singular as the fact may appear, this decline may be traced as far back as the reign of Solyman, whose power exceeded that of any other contemporary sovereign. It was then that the women of the harem first began to exert an influence in the management of public affairs. It was by his appointment, that the sceptre passed at his death into the hands of the least efficient of his sons. The changes made by him in the feudal system were important and numerous. With his reign, the progress of Ottoman conquest was arrested. He had already carried his victorious arms into Persia in the East, and as far as Vienna in the West ; and the valor of Barbarossa had rendered him master of the Mediterranean. But a sad reverse awaited his successors. The Persians, though far inferior in power and numbers, supplied their defect of power by their veneration for the Shah ; and resorted against the Turks to the same experiment of laying waste their country before the enemy, which has more recently been employed by the Russians against a modern despot, while in the West, the advances of the Ottomans were checked by the energy and vigor of the House of Hapsburg. Their attempts to capture Malta were unavailing. It cost them prodigious efforts to reduce a few small castles in the Austrian part of Hungary ; and their maritime power was broken by the defeat which they sustained at Lepanto in 1591, a blow from which their navy has never yet recovered.

It was the natural effect of the institutions which we have mentioned, that the Turks remained a peculiar people, distinct and separate from the inhabitants of the countries, which they overran. In fact, they were never really established in

those countries, as the Germans were in Courland, or the Normans in Great Britain ; but resembled rather a garrison, or an army of occupation. Far from imitating the industry of those countries, they endeavored to destroy it. Instead of advancing in civilisation themselves, they obstructed the progress of every subject nation. They of course experienced no sympathy or support. They were regarded only in the light of inexorable and oppressive masters ; and they were secure only so long, as the oppressed could find no means of effectual resistance ; so long only, as they continued to be united, well-disciplined and vigilant. Neither the constitution of the empire, nor the character of the Turks, were at all favorable to the progress of civilisation, even among themselves. It is true, that they have been frequently pronounced by travellers, among the rest by Lord Byron, to be better than the Greeks ; and we have some personal knowledge of the correctness of this assertion. Nor is this surprising. Where oppression has been long-continued and severe, the spirit of the master is always loftier and more generous than that of the slave.

We intended only to give a brief outline of the causes of the decline of the Ottoman empire ; and the task would be by no means uninteresting of tracing the history of that decline down to the period, when the present Sultan Mahmud II., attempted to introduce many European improvements and modes of organisation. The corps of Janissaries, as is well known, was dissolved if not destroyed by him in 1826. What would have been the natural effects of this measure, it is useless now to conjecture. This fact at least is certain, that the Turks were never less powerful than at the moment of the late invasion ; and their imbecility appeared so much the more striking, from having been previously in a great measure concealed by that envy and jealousy, which induced several of the European powers on all former occasions of the kind, to uphold and strengthen them, and to arrest the progress of their assailants.
